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BRITISH WEST INDIA COLONIES in 1859. *Abstract of the Official Reports by the Governors.*

[WE are indebted to the "Standard" newspaper of 10th October, 1861, for the following useful abstract of the Colonial Blue Book for 1859. The "Standard" is rapidly earning a favourable distinction in the daily press, for the intelligence and care with which it places before its readers the substance of important public documents. —ED. S. J.]

"JAMAICA.—In 1859 (which is the last year of the official returns throughout the whole report), the total revenue of this island was 279,935*l.*, and the expenditure 262,142*l.* If we take the three preceding years we observe some fluctuations, which are trifling, and accounted for by purely local circumstances—as buildings and roads, and repayments of floating loans; but these we omit to specify, considering it more acceptable to our readers to devote our space to information rather of an Imperial than of a strictly local character. There is an island debt of 852,000*l.*, but it is in process of annual liquidation. There is no return of the population, but a census is ordered to be taken in 1861; but it is inferred from an ecclesiastical enumeration that the number of souls may be about 360,000. Taking an average of the years 1857, 1858, and 1859, the value of the four great staples—sugar, rum, coffee, and pimento, with logwood and dyewoods—was 1,056,890*l.*; and of the minor articles, 46,609*l.* It is the strongly expressed opinion of Governor Darling, that, on an average of seasons, the *export of sugar* will rarely exceed 30,000 tons, unless immigrant contract labour be more largely employed; and this leads to the subject of negro industry. The Governor sees no prospect 'of an augmentation of the effective strength of that portion of the native population who work *for hire* on the larger plantations,' because he doubts whether sufficient wages can be given for sugar cultivation to stimulate the negro, who is fonder of his ease than of money. His wants are few, and he is indifferent to hoarding. The available statistics of agriculture are however scanty, and quite insufficient to convey a correct and comprehensive view of industrial occupations. But one remarkable fact appears well worthy of attention. If the African race cannot be roused to activity by high wages, they work diligently when they cultivate the *soil on their own account*; and these are now rising up as an independent, respectable, and trustworthy middle class. They are even becoming the employers of hired labour. The gratifying result is that the emancipated race evince a capacity for freedom when they can appropriate to themselves a fair share of the wealth they create. They properly value the possession of a leasehold or freehold property, and in due time we may hope to see labourers, animated by the example of their brethren who have achieved independence, more and more inclined to work for wages as the sole means, if accompanied by economy, of

acquiring that capital which will place them in the position of becoming the owners of moderate holdings. Many years have elapsed since Mr. Carey, the American economist, expressed his conviction that what is now witnessed in Jamaica would prove the true solution of slavery in the Southern states. He predicts that a time will come when 'there will be seen to arise a class of free black men, cultivating for their own use their own land, bought from their old masters, who will find in the price of the land a compensation for the price of the labour.'*

"BRITISH HONDURAS.—Here the chief trade is *mahogany*, which has been entirely engrossed by four or five influential firms. Two of these failed in 1859, and the result was great distress at Belize. The resident importing merchants who used to sell goods to purchasers from the contiguous states of Central America have lost their customers by a change in the course of trade, because the facilities of steam packet navigation have induced foreigners to draw their supplies direct from British manufacturers instead of procuring them, as heretofore, through Belize. However, the staple trade in mahogany and dyewoods is maintained with vigour; and there is the prospect of easier communication with Guatemala. The trade of Honduras is, however, small. In 1859 the value of the exports was 288,000*l.*, and of the imports 175,000*l.*

"BAHAMAS.—In 1859 the revenue was 30,727*l.* net. This is a ridiculously small sum; but the value of the imports was 213,166*l.*, and of the exports 141,896*l.* The staple produce of this colony consists of *pineapples and oranges*; but there is another source of trade which will astonish most of our readers—that is '*wrecks*,' which in the very words of the report are described as 'the great and constant element of our trade and revenue.' Neither agriculture nor manufactures offer any profit compared to that derived from the wrecker's vocation. But this subject is so curiously infamous that we shall transfer to our columns the language of the report:—'This calling, which distributes prizes among blacks and whites alike, puts on a level and gives to both the opportunities of easy self-indulgence. As I often had to remark, it involves crime and the connivance at crime. But I doubt whether the treacherous plots which are so successfully laid for the destruction of vessels are generally known to any but the commanders of the wrecking vessels and the masters of the wrecked ships. The crews, I imagine, have a general rather than a special knowledge of the schemes which bring the merchant vessel and the parasitic wrecker close together near a reef. The general demoralisation which the system engenders throughout every class in the colony will increase until American shipowners set the example of greater honesty, and American underwriters are more anxious to suppress the crimes which they condemn than to make their remonstrances against the English Government the vehicle of puffing their own resources and touting for fresh customers.' The negro in the Bahamas is not so favourably spoken of as the negro in Jamaica.

* "The Past, the Present, and the Future," p. 364. By H. G. Carey.

The negro creole in the Bahamas is not devoid of ambition, but lacks persistent will and energy, both physical and mental. He is happier with his hominy and plot of ground than he would be if assured of a handsome independence on the condition of eight or ten years' hard work. He is a grumbler and a gossip. Such are the descendants of the ancient slaves; but the case is very different with those fresh from Africa and just rescued from Spanish slave ships. These are generally useful and energetic, and they perform the rougher work of the colony. The mulatto and his varied species are the best of this race; they have pride, ambition, and energy, and, when educated, are capable of the success to which they aspire. Such are the distinctions pointed out by Governor Bayley. There is little industry in the Bahamas group. The islands of Eleuthera and St. Salvador raise fruit for the English and American markets, but in the whole colony the culture of corn is trifling, and that of cotton is wholly neglected, while the Nassau market is supplied with meat from the southern districts of the United States. It is recommended that steam navigation be established between New Providence and the out islands.

"**TURK'S ISLANDS.**—These are an appendage to the government of Jamaica. The chief source of revenue is derived from the salinas, an export duty on salt being levied of one farthing per bushel of 35 imperial quarts. The population is only 3,250 souls, and with that fact we may dismiss this little group.

"**TRINIDAD.**—Taking an average of three years, the customs and tonnage duties figure for about 74,000*l.*, and the local revenues, which are the receipts of the ward unions, average 25,000*l.* Lord Harris divided the island into wards, for which he is highly praised. The expenditure on the fixed establishments of the island is put down at about 53,000*l.*; but the unfixed and contingent charges are very large in proportion, those for 1859 exceeding 120,000*l.* The value of the imports in 1859, was 730,000*l.*, and of the exports, 820,000*l.* As cotton now occupies the manufacturing mind, we may state that in the year 1859 Trinidad exported 295 bales. The financial balance sheet last forwarded shows the estimated revenue of the island at 176,000*l.*, and the expenditure at 180,000*l.*, but this excess is increased by some local items which we need not enumerate; it is sufficient to state that the Governor proposes to make good the deficiency by an income tax of 5*d.* in the pound on all incomes of 100*l.* and upwards, and he expects it will yield 8,000*l.* a year. Thus this bad fiscal principle, which all parties agree cannot be made practically equitable, is about to travel to the West Indies. The most interesting part of this report refers to *immigration*. It is known that most of the colonies must have perished, or returned to a state of weeds and jungle, had not labourers been procured from India and China after the Negro Emancipation Act had been passed. In 1858 the Indian population in Trinidad was 8,854; in 1859, it was 13,544, but this was not entirely due to fresh arrivals, but was partly attributable to the registration of many adults omitted in the former census, and principally to a more particular registration of

children. In 1859 there were in the island 3,868 immigrants whose term of industrial residence had expired, and are at liberty to work or not; but of these 1,360 renewed contracts with their employers, at a premium of from 2*l.* to 4*l.* per annum. This is a satisfactory proof that they have been well treated, and are content with their bargain. Of the 3,868 who have thus terminated their industrial residence, all are entitled to return passages, except 750 who arrived since January, 1854, who are consequently under a contract of residence for ten years, of which one-half must be passed under written agreement and one-half not. This leaves 3,118 entitled *at present* to return passages. Of these 210 registered themselves as wishful to proceed to India, but before the period of their departure arrived the great majority changed their minds and entered into fresh contracts, so that out of the total number only 35 resolved to quit, and most of these had acquired comparative affluence in trade. These are highly gratifying facts, and silence the libels of those who have compared the immigration system to slavery in disguise. The Bengalee coolies are preferred to those from Madras on account of their superior docility; and the latter are said to be intemperate, idle, and desponding. In Trinidad there are orphan homes and training schools for Indian immigrants, and there is a well-balanced proportion between the children of both sexes, which augurs favourably for their social future.

“BRITISH GUIANA.—The revenue for the year 1829 was 275,618*l.*, and the expenditure 263,194*l.* The import duties are said to show an improvement of 24,000*l.*, but the total amount is not stated. The debt of the colony was 449,802*l.*, of which 320,000*l.* was due to Her Majesty’s Government. The military defences of the port, abandoned for want of means in 1854, have been resumed. The batteries are nearly complete, and are deemed effective against privateers. This is all of general interest that can be gathered from the report of Governor Wodehouse, which is very scanty; nor is there a single appendix.

“BARBADOS.—The revenue for the year 1859 was 87,000*l.*; the expenditure 80,000*l.*; but on the four years ending with 1859 there was a surplus to the treasury of 32,000*l.* During the last four years the debt of the colony has been extinguished, for though there remains an outstanding claim of 290*l.*, it cannot be called in. The imports for the year 1859 were 1,049,000; the exports 1,225,000*l.* Barbados supplies *foreign manure* to the neighbouring British colonies and partially to the French. This inter-colonial trade in guano averages in value about 45,000*l.* per annum. Governor Hincks, formerly Prime Minister of Canada, describes the condition of the island as prosperous.

“GRENADA.—The fixed revenue for the year 1859 was 13,500*l.*, raised to nearly 17,000*l.* by additions accruing from taxes levied under a local money bill. Of this total about 9,500*l.* are the proceeds of duties on imports. In consequence of the arrival of Indian labourers the duty on imported rice had risen from 297*l.* to 516*l.*,

and the abolition of tonnage duties is expected to give some stimulus to trade. The total value of imports was, in 1859, 124,000*l.*, and of exports 131,000*l.* On both sides of this account some fractional deductions are made for goods imported and subsequently exported. Within the last three years agriculture has made considerable progress, and it has been ascribed to the introduction of Indian labourers. By their industry seven large estates have been reclaimed in the last three years, these having been abandoned when the negro refused to work after his emancipation. They are now in a flourishing condition. The immigrants only number 879, but their presence and conduct are described as 'most telling on the Creole labourers.' So well contented are the labourers that they told Governor Hincks that they had no intention of returning home, but would settle in the island when their term of industrial residence had expired. This confirms the intelligence from Trinidad.

"TOBAGO.—Of this colony nothing is reported but what is strictly local. Everything is described as prosperous. In round numbers the population numbers 15,000.

"ST. VINCENT.—The information is very scanty. There is a great want of Indian immigrants. The island is highly fertile and well adapted to the sugar cane. It exports some hundred tons of poz-zolani, which, mixed with two-thirds of lime, produce an excellent hydraulic mortar and cement for pavements. It is shipped at the rate of 8*s.* per ton. Here grow the bread-fruit trees most luxuriantly, as nutritious as the yam and potato. The cabbage trees are gigantic, and the palms are tall and stately. Some insect blight has killed the cocoa nuts. The bamboo cane is excellent.

"ST. LUCIA.—The population is put at 26,000, but this estimate is deemed below the actual amount. Some 1,200 Indian labourers have arrived, who do not appear to be enumerated, and many persons come to St. Lucia annually from other colonies, chiefly from Martinique. The coolies are reclaiming land thrown out of cultivation. Old Buildings are repaired, and former activity and enterprise are being renewed.

"ANTIGUA.—The revenue for the year 1859 was 40,000*l.*; the expenditure, 39,000*l.* There is a public debt due to Her Majesty's Treasury of 40,000*l.* The last census of the population, taken in 1856, gave 35,408 souls. Five-seventh of the population have ceased to reside on estates, but live in towns or villages. The average number of inmates to each dwelling in the towns and villages is nearly five and a-half; on the estates, scarcely three and a-half. Morality seems to have been almost exiled from Antigua. Out of 4,134 births registered in three years, 2,201 were illegitimate. This proof of vice, it is said, would be strengthened if the number of abortions and premature births could be ascertained. Here children are deemed an encumbrance to the mother; they are badly nursed, and badly fed, and are deprived of proper medical attendance. These are among the causes of declining population. Under slavery these

evils did not occur; the planter provided the slave with everything needful. The imports of 1859 were 203,000*l.*; the exports, 289,000*l.* In the same year the exports of sugar were 13,706 hogsheads; of molasses, 675,000 gallons; of rum, 112,120 gallons. Formerly, in 1834, Antigua produced nearly 21,000 hogsheads of sugar; of late years it has rarely made 16,000. The soil is rich; the seasons very uncertain. Much land is still uncultured. However, the condition and prospects of the colony are considered by Governor Eyre as unsatisfactory. What is chiefly wanted is a large influx of the industrious coolies.

“MONTserrat, ST. KITt’s, NEVIS, DOMINICA, THE VIRGIN ISLANDS.—These are all under the Governor of Antigua, and with it constitutes the group known as the Leeward Islands, as Barbados, Grenada, Tobago, St. Vincent, and St. Lucia constitute the group known as the Windward Islands. Of the first four in the list of Leeward Islands no information of any European interest is conveyed in the report, and not much of the last, or Virgin Islands. Of these the most valuable product is copper, obtained from the mines of Virgin Gorda. The general exports go to the Danish islands of St. Thomas and St. Croix, which are only valued at 11,000*l.*; to British North American and West Indian colonies, 460*l.*; to the United Kingdom, *nil*. The exports referred to are horned cattle, horses, firewood, charcoal, and building lime; and if we notice such trifles it is because we wish to give a complete statement of what is scarcely known. The copper mine at Gorda was worked in 1839, and closed in 1842 for want of capital. In 1842 the copper raised from these mines, and sold at Swansea, yielded nearly 18 per cent. of marketable metal, and realised a price of 16*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.* per ton. The works are resumed under favourable auspices, and the returns are said to be rich and abundant.

“MAURITIUS.—This island is the most productive of the sugar colonies of the British Crown. In 1859 the revenue amounted to 597,000*l.* in respect of receipts within the colony alone, and was augmented by 12,000*l.* received by agents in London for dividends and profits on investments. In the same year the expenditure was 553,000*l.* The remittances to India on account of coolie immigration were 53,000*l.* There are paper-currency notes in circulation which exceed 200,000*l.* in amount. These are covered by cash in the Commercial and Oriental Banks, and by Consols which stand in the name of the commissioners of the currency. The savings’ bank flourishes, and its utility is more appreciated as its operations are known. About one-third of the depositors are Indian coolies, who there hoard up the earnings which they take home when their term of industrial residence has expired. In 1858 these depositors drew 10,151*l.*, on their departure for India—a gratifying fact in a double sense, as it shows their wages to be liberal, and that they are a thrifty race. There can be no doubt of the readiness of the Hindoos to work the soil of Mauritius when they can realise such large emoluments, and it is clear that if the natives were proportionately remunerated in their own country the charge of laziness so unjustly

preferred against them would disappear. Their employers will not invest capital unless they have the certainty of high profits: and why should it be expected that labourers will work for them unless they receive high wages? In 1859 the sugar crop exceeded 115,000 tons, chiefly sold in English, French, and Australian markets. The total value of goods imported was 2,025,890*l.*, and of specie 414,931*l.* Total value of goods exported, 2,544,000*l.*; and of specie, 14,906*l.* The declared value of sugar exported, the produce of the colony, was 2,346,427*l.* The tonnage of vessels entered inwards was 304,616, outwards 308,642.

The general population of the island is computed at	96,526
Immigrant Indian population	201,979
Alien population, chiefly Chinese	6,541
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	305,046
	<hr/>

The population in 1859 was one-third larger than in 1851, when the census was taken. At Seychelles and the other dependencies of Mauritius there are 8,001 souls. This great increase is due to arrival of the coolies, whose contract term of residence is five years; and, as already stated, the treatment they receive and the wages they earn, ensure a continuous supply of Indian labour."